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NBC

ADVERTISER PARTICIPATING UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS WRITER

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CHICAGO OUTLET WMAQ

(12:30-1:30 PM)
TIME EST

(MARCH 13, 1936)
DATE

(FRIDAY)
DAY

PRODUCTION

ANNOUNCER

ENGINEER

REMARKS

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers"

ORCHESTRA: QUARTET: RANGER SONG

ANNOUNCER: Today we're going to try to listen in again on one of Ranger Jim ROBBINS' stories. Every now and then, you know, some of the folks around Winding Creek drop in at the Pine Cone Ranger Station of an evening, and get Ranger Jim to tell a story or two about the guardians of our great National Forests - the Rangers whose big job it is to manage and protect the forests that cover our vital watersheds, that harbor much of our remaining wildlife, that give us our great outdoor playgrounds, and contribute in many other ways to our continuing welfare.

Well, the Pine Cone folks - Jim and Boss Robbins, and Assistant Ranger Jerry Quick - are there at the Ranger Station - and there's several friends that dropped in: there's Mary Holloway, the school teacher, and little Billy who wants to be a ranger when he grows up, and two or three other folks. There's a cheerful, crackling fire going in the fire place, and -- all right, here we are --

MARY: Mr. Robbins, you promised to tell us a story tonight, you know.

JIM: Did I, Mary? (CHUCKLES) Well, I s'pose I'll have to get the old thinking cap on then, huh?

JERRY: Yeah, tell us about some of the early days in the Forest Service.

JIM: The early days huh? -- Well, Jerry, some of us old Rangers had some pretty tough experiences in the old days when you've stacked yourself against all kinds of odds for the sake of an ideal -- the ideal of protection and wise use of our forests -- and gone through fire and water for that ideal the best part of a life-time, and the job kinda gets under your skin. -- I had a letter the other day from Gene Tully --

JERRY: Gene Tully? Who's he?

JIM: He's an old-time Ranger that's put in more than thirty years on the job in California -- on the Sierra and the Mendocino National Forests -- and he's getting around to retirement age now. Pretty soon he'll be out of the Forest Service, officially, -- but, he says, "they can stop my pay, but I'll be damned if they can stop my work." -- And I reckon that's the way a lot of us old-timers feel about it.

BOSS: And Rangers' wives, too, Jim.

JIM: That's right, Boss. A lot of us Rangers would've had a hard time doing the job without our wives to help us. Many a time a Ranger's wife has picked bit for him in an emergency. Remember the time, Boss, when you --

BESS: Oh, Jim, let's not talk about that.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) All right. Anyway, Bess has been just as loyal to the job as if she was a Ranger herself.

MARY: Oh, I know she has, Mr. Robbins. -- But remember, you're going to tell us a story.

JIM: Yes? Well now, let's see. -- Did I ever tell you about Graham McConnell?

JERRY: Let's have it, Jim.

JIM: Well, -- you've heard yarns about cats with nine lives, that always came back, no matter where you took 'em -- but I reckon it would have taken all of a cat's nine lives and then some to get through the kind of an Idaho blizzard that Graham McConnell got into. It was one humdinger of a storm -- I'll tell you more about it pretty quick, but anyhow it nearly cost Ranger McConnell his life when he got lost in it.

JERRY: A Forest Ranger lost?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Yep. Even Forest Rangers get lost now and then. Anybody's apt to get lost sometimes. The important thing is to keep your head and do the right thing if you do get lost.

JERRY: Yeah, that's right.

JIM:

Well, Ranger McConnell was in charge of the Middle Fork District in central Idaho -- one of the most remote and inaccessible regions of the state in those days -- and is still is. McConnell and a helper were assigned to build a new ranger station at the junction of Marble Creek and the middle fork of the Salmon River, way back in the vast Thunder Mountain Country. -- Well, winter came on before they got the station finished, so they holed up there and stayed on to finish the job. -- There they were, 80 miles from Cascade, the nearest post office, and with a thin, fragile telephone wire, subject to wind and storm damage, as their only link to civilization. -- One day, they got a telephone call from the Supervisor's office --

(FADEOUT FOR FLASHBACK)

VOICE: (FADING IN) Hey, McConnell -- Hey, McConnell -- the boss wants to talk to yuh on the phone.

MCCONNELL: (OFF) What's he want?

VOICE: I dunno. Wants to talk to yuh.

McCONNELL: (COMING UP) All right. -- (TO PHONE) Hello -- Yeah, hello, Chief. -- Huh, when? -- Yeah, I can make it all right. -- Yeah, sure. -- Let's see, what day's today? -- Yeah, that's right. Tell the boys at Cascade I'll be pullin' in their Thursday night. -- Yeah, Snow's deep, but it ain't bad going. I can make it all right. -- All right, Chief. So long.

VOICE: What's up, Mack?

McCONNELL: I got orders to attend a Rangers' meeting at Boise, Shorty.

VOICE: That so? When yuh leavin'?

McCONNELL: I'll have to be pullin' out first thing in the morning.

VOICE: Gee, that's a long trip to make on foot, Mack. You'll hafta use the webs the whole way.

McCONNELL: 'Twon't be so bad, Shorty. I'll be hitting a ranger station each night, see? It works out just right.

VOICE: Yeah, that's right, too.

McCONNELL: I'm sorry I gotta leave yuh up here by yourself a spell, Shorty, but I'm sure glad I've got this chance to go on. Chances are I'll get to spend the Christmas holidays with the family - see?

VOICE: Say, that'll be swell, won't it? -- Don't you mind about me, Mack. I kin git along all right up here. I betcha I'll have the job all done by the time you get back.

• McCONNELL: Okay, Shorty. I'll be leaving yuh before sun-up in the morning.

(FADEOUT)

• JIM: Well, a jaunt like that through mountainous country would be a pretty hazardous thing for the average man, but McConnell was an experienced woodsman, and didn't think much about it, till about noon when he turned up Pistol Creek it had started snowing and the snow was getting so blinding that it obliterated the trail. All he had to guide him was that telephone line that ran along the trail. About dark he reached a deserted trapper's cabin, so he spent the night there. Before daylight, though, he was battling difficult going along the trail again. At the cabin he'd found an old pair of skis. McConnell hadn't had much experience with ski travel, but he figured he could make better time with 'em. So he abandoned his snowshoes and put 'em on. They did make it a little faster going down grade but not so good up-grade, so late in the afternoon he abandoned his telephone line route and attempted a short-cut. He thought he was following Johnson Creek and kept on going till long after nightfall. Then it dawned on him that he was hopelessly lost. He'd come plumb smack into a rocky bluff in the dark. -- Well, he scraped over the snow as best he could, and got a fire started in the lee of the boulders and made himself as comfortable as he could. The fire was just for warmth; he'd already run out of food, seein' as he'd expected to stop at ranger stations and hadn't packed much of any.

(MORE)

McCONNELL: (WEAKLY - MUTTERING TO SELF) Gotta keep goin' -- Gotta keep -- goin' -- Uh -- Fell over something -- Guess -- I'll rest awhile -- You can't rest -- McConnell -- Get up -- If I -- don't -- get up -- I'm a gonner -- Gotta keep goin' -- Gotta -- Keep -- Hey -- I can't seem to -- see anything -- What's this -- Fence -- it's a fence -- Penn Basin -- Ranger Station -- Hold onto -- the fence -- McConnell -- Hold onto it -- Keep goin' -- I -- gotta keep goin' -- (SOUND OF STORM UP) There it is -- It's the -- Ranger Station -- You'll make it -- McConnell -- Keep goin' -- (CALLS, WEAKLY) Hey -- open the door -- (WEAK POUNDING ON DOOR) --

(SOUND OF DOOR OPENING VOICES UP)

McCONNELL: (WEAKLY) Hello folks -- I made it --

VOICE: It's Ranger McConnell! -- By George, I never thought I'd see him alive again -- Yes sir, you made it, Mack! Here, help me with him; he's passed out --

(FADEOUT)

(FADEIN JIM)

JIM: So Ranger McConnell stumbled and slumped through the door of the Penn Basin Ranger Station after what I reckon was one of the hardest and longest fights any man ever put up against wind and snow and storm --

(PAUSE)

MARY: What happened to him after that, Mr. Robbins?

JIM: After that? (CHUCKLES) Why, he attended the Ranger meeting at Boise -- that's what he'd come for

(FADEOUT - MUSIC)

ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers is presented by the National Broadcasting Company with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service.

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